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PETER HANSBOROUGH BELL.

C. LUTHER COYNER.

Governor Bell sprung from a noble race and fought bravely under three different flags. He was with Sam Houston at San Jacinto under the Lone Star; he was with Taylor and wielded his sword under the Stars and Stripes at Monterey and Buena Vista in Mexico in 1847; and last he was a Confederate and followed the Stars and Bars. He was inspector-general of Texas in 1839, was captain of the Texas Rangers of Southwest Texas in 1845, was twice elected Governor of Texas, and twice represented the Western District of Texas in the United States Congress.

Peter Hansborough Bell, the son of Capt. James Madison Bell and Elizabeth Hansborough Bell, was born March 11, 1810, in Culpeper county, Virginia, and died at his home near Littleton, N. C., March 16, 1898, 88 years old.¹

The Bell family is Scotch-Irish. In Scotland it has produced a number of great men. It is not often that three sons of one father become eminent, but this is true of two branches of the Bell family in Scotland within the last one hundred years. Sir William Bell's three sons, born in Edinburgh, were Sir Charles Bell (1778-1842), a world known surgeon; George Joseph Bell (1770-1843), a lawyer, jurist, and author; and John Bell (1763-1820), author and traveller. And Patrick Bell, of the West Scotland branch of the family, had five sons, Andrew the surgeon, John the judge, Robert the minister, Thomas the soldier, and Henry the author, all of whom became noted in Scotland, England, and America.

Governor Bell is descended direct from Lord James Bell, of Belhaven, who lost his life fighting in the service of the Scottish crown. A less remote ancestor was Lieutenant James Bell, who went to Ireland in 1690 with William III and for his bravery in battle received a grant of land near Enniskillen. There some of his descendants still live. Four of them, however, all cousins,

¹Pennybacker's *New History of Texas* has his name "Hansboro P. Bell," and says that "Governor Bell died in 1892."

three named James and one named Joseph, came to America from Ireland and settled in Lancaster county, Pa., in 1740. They remained in Pennsylvania but a short time, and all moved to Augusta county, Va., whither they finally brought their families. From these four the writer can trace all the Bells of this country. One of the four had a son named Samuel, who was an officer in the revolution, while quite young, and who, along with some of his cousins, was with Morgan at Cowpens, and became a major under Washington. He was the grandfather of Governor Bell. The father of the Governor was a lieutenant in the war of 1812 and must have been commissioned captain, for he was known for years as Capt. James Bell.

To show that the Bells have been a fighting family, in addition to the fact already stated that the branch to which the Governor belonged was represented in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Texas Revolution, the Mexican War, and the Confederate War, I cull from the Genealogy of the American Bells and the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion the following summary of the roster of Bell officers. On the Confederate side there were three brigadier-generals, nine colonels, five lieutenant-colonels, nine majors, thirty-four captains, thirteen lieutenants, three corporals, two sergeants, two surgeons, two adjutant-generals, one quartermaster—a total of seventy-one. On the Federal side there were one brigadier-general, nine colonels, five lieutenant-colonels, eleven majors, thirty-two captains, fifteen lieutenants, four surgeons, one adjutant, four corporals, five sergeants, and in the navy one rear-admiral, and one commander—a total of eighty-nine. The grand total of officers for both sides is one hundred and sixty. Of these, ten on the Confederate side and eight on the Federal side lost their lives in battle. Judging from the proportion of privates that went from the writer's native county, that of Augusta in Virginia, which was eighteen to one officer, over three thousand Bells of the same family were arrayed against each other in the Civil War. One branch of this family has given five governors to the different States. Of these, three were governors of New Hampshire, as follows: Samuel in 1819, John in 1828, and Charles H. in 1881. The other two were P. H., Governor of Texas in 1849, and Frank, Governor of Nevada in 1890. From another branch came Thomas Bell of Pennsylvania, an officer in the French and

Indian War; Captain William, killed in the Revolution; Captain David, who did good service in the War of 1812²; and a lieutenant in the Spanish-American War of 1898. Four of this family, C. H., James, John, and Samuel, were United States senators. Ten were in the United States Congress, and one served fourteen years. Two were rear-admirals in the United States navy, and four were State supreme judges.

Governor Bell was reared in Culpeper county, Virginia. When he heard of Texans fighting for their liberty in 1836, at the age of twenty-six he left his native State, and in March of that year reached Velasco, from which place he proceeded on foot to the Brazos. There he enlisted as a private soldier under Gen. Sam Houston. He fought bravely at San Jacinto, and won not only admiration from his comrades, but praise from General Houston as well.

Having been inspector-general of the Texas army and a true and tried ranger, when the Mexican War broke out, Mr. Bell was made lieutenant-colonel of the Second Texas regiment, of which Jack Hays was colonel. The captains of this regiment were M. T. Johnson, S. P. Ross (father of the late Governor Ross), Samuel Highsmith, J. S. Gillett, H. W. Baylor, Jacob Roberts, G. M. Armstrong, Isaac Ferguson, E. M. Daggett, and A. E. Handley.

In 1849 Mr. Bell was elected Governor of Texas, and in 1851 he was re-elected. In 1853 he became United States congressman from the Western District of Texas, and in 1855 he entered upon his second term in that office.

In 1857 Governor Bell married Miss Ella Eaton of North Carolina, and moved to Littleton in that State. Here he lived until the Civil War broke out, when he raised a regiment and equipped it out of his own funds, he being what was then considered wealthy. He was made colonel of his regiment, which did valiant service for the Confederacy. Before the war he was the owner of over five hundred slaves and lived in lordly style. All was taken from him and destroyed except the bare land; and the Twenty-second Legislature of Texas, having learned the fact, in 1891 voted him a dona-

²One of his sons, "Uncle Jim," married the writer's Aunt Sallie, who gave six brave boys to Company C of the Fifth Virginia, one of Stonewall Jackson's crack regiments.

tion of land and a liberal pension—this, too, without solicitation on his part.

Brown in his History of Texas says that Governor Bell “was a man of splendid physique.....combined with true courage,” and that he “was distinguished by kind and genial characteristics.” This was true of him, and it is just what makes soldiers love and follow their leaders. His rangers and soldiers in both wars idolized him and would follow him anywhere. His picture on page 34 of Daniell’s Personnel of the Texas State Government is a good likeness. He was tall and well made, and had pleasant manners, a musical voice, a kind and gentle disposition, and was in every way a true gentleman.

In 1874 those comrades and soldiers of his who were still living made him a honorary member of their association. The writer has before him the original copy of the minutes of the association sent to Governor Bell, which reads as follows:

“Association of Soldiers of the Mexican War of the State of Texas.
Austin, April, 1874.

At a meeting of the association held at Austin on the 25th. day of April, 1874, the following motion was unanimously adopted:

“Upon motion of Gen. Wm. Steele, the following gentlemen were elected honorary members of the association, viz., Col. John C. Hays and Gov. P. Hansborough Bell.

“Attest:

E. W. SHANDS,
“Secretary.”

As stated before, Governor Bell died at his home at Littleton, N. C., March 16, 1898.

Governor Bell was a brave man, a good man, a great man. When the struggling Texans sounded the bugle note and call of drum to arms he left his home and native State and fought with them for liberty. There are some yet living who marched with him under the Lone Star flag. With them he kept time to the wild music through the pincy woods and prairies of this then vast wilderness to the field of glory, to die, if necessary, for freedom and for right. There may be those who stood guard with him in the rain and storm and under the silent stars. There are some, perhaps, who can remember the weary marches and the furrows and ravines run-

ning with blood; and there may be still alive a few who followed him as he led them between contending hosts and won the victory for Texas, who honored him while living and will never forget him, though dead.